



Questions for Seattle Mayoral Candidates – Magnolia Chamber of Commerce

The Magnolia Chamber of Commerce believes that an educated, engaged electorate is one of the key aspects of a thriving community. To assist our members, the local business community, and Magnolia residents better understand our Seattle mayoral candidates, we are asking each candidate to please fill out the questionnaire covering topics important to the Magnolia neighborhood AND/OR be interviewed one-on-one by our executive director, relying on the techniques we have developed for our Chamber Chat series (see [Chamber Chat interview with Councilmember Andrew Lewis](#))

Each mayoral candidate will be asked the exact same questions. We will post your video and/or your written answers on our website and make available to our members via a special election newsletter that will go out before the primary election date.

About the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce. The Magnolia Chamber represents just over 370 Magnolia businesses and family members. Our mission is to add to the vibrancy of our community by fostering connections between Magnolia's businesses, residents, and community groups. Our purpose is to promote civic and commercial progress in our business districts and neighborhood. Learn more about the Magnolia Chamber by visiting <https://discovermagnolia.org/>

For questions and/or to set up a video interview, please contact Jason Thibeaux, Executive Director, Magnolia Chamber of Commerce.

Seattle Mayoral Candidate Questions (these questions can be answered either by video with our Executive Director, Jason Thibeaux at 206-618-1589 or jason@discovermagnolia.org and/or filled out and sent to the Magnolia Chamber, 3213 West Wheeler Street, #42, Seattle, WA 98199

Good Governance, Effective Leadership

1. What distinct leadership strengths would you bring to City Hall if elected the next mayor of Seattle? Please provide examples of your leadership strengths to assist us in identifying you as an effective mayor.

I am running because we need a Mayor to meet this moment of unprecedented challenge and opportunity, a Mayor with the lived experience to tackle big issues; a decisive leader fully committed to productive dialogue, planning and execution. We must rebuild the fundamental trust between city government and the people it serves. We need the highest standard of collaboration and vision. The stakes are too high.

My record of collaborative leadership is clear: I was elected 3 times to the Seattle City Council – citywide and for my home district representing South Seattle – and chosen by peers to serve twice as Council President, one of only a few in our city's history to ever hold that role more than once. As Council President, I was a voice for a more equitable city, someone known as a collaborator between labor and business, who could broker compromises between councilmembers, putting forward serious proposals and big, nation-leading ideas.

I was a staunch advocate for police reform, built out the city's Race and Social Justice Initiative, created the pilot program that became the Seattle Promise, passed Seattle's Green New Deal and first climate action plan, led efforts to 'ban the box,' expanded affordable housing, and so much more.

I retired from the City Council at the end of 2019, and since then have continued advocating for economic opportunity and social justice, leading the COVID-19 Small Business Recovery Task Force and serving as General Counsel to the Rainier Valley Development Fund, a community-based lending institution that preserves and strengthens cultural diversity, long-term livability and economic development.

I will be an advocate for the types of bold, innovative policies that will make Seattle a national leader in driving opportunity and ensuring fairness and equity. A few of my new ideas: a Seattle Jobs Center, the Race and Data Initiative, and a universal healthcare program.

2. How will you, if elected mayor, work with the city council work together to address community concerns, including increasing affordable housing, reducing crime, promoting public safety, and encouraging and supporting small business growth? And what specific steps will you take to ensure a more positive working relationship with the city council given the relative rancor of the past 12 months?

I'm running to unite Seattle and bring our communities together to solve the challenges we face and move our city forward by embracing our progressive values. Our city is facing an onslaught of crises, all of which demand leadership committed to ensuring positive change and progress for the people and communities who make this place special. We will urgently address the homelessness crisis and housing affordability; economic and community recovery from COVID-19; needed police reform, gun violence and public safety; the climate crisis, public transit expansion, and transportation solutions; and so much more.

When I served as Council President, I made it a core part of my leadership to identify our shared values and priorities and use those to drive achievable policy. That's the same approach I'll bring to the Mayor's Office – working with each Councilmember to identify programs and policies that we agree on, and then working together to bring them to life. We have far more in common than we have opposed, so let's do the things we agree on first, and then collaborate, cooperate, and compromise to work through the disagreements where they exist.

Division, finger pointing, and anger drive disruption and prevent progress. But we know with a new approach, renewed accountability, and a commitment to our shared progressive values, we can turn the tide. Under my leadership, there will be a commitment to getting things done. As Mayor, I will be a leader who takes on the challenges we face by collaborating with others, recruiting the best and brightest, and bringing communities and stakeholders together.

3. What would you like to see from local Chambers in terms of working positively and proactively with you and your office? How can organizations like the Magnolia Chamber of Commerce be an asset to the new mayor?

This is really what my campaign is all about: Rejecting finger pointing, division, and false narratives and instead uniting together and aligning on our shared values and goals to make real progress. I believe local Chambers have a critical role to play in our recovery, and that small businesses and workers who power them are going to be important partners in this work.

Your perspective is important because it provides insight into the challenges facing businesses in your community, and often, across the entire city. Ultimately, this is about the attitude our next mayor brings. Do they listen to the needs of small and local businesses? Do they act swiftly when concerns arise? Do they partner together with small businesses on initiatives and shared solutions? My record is clear – as an attorney and as a Councilmember, I recognize our shared vision for a prosperous, livable, thriving city. Under my administration, there will be no doubt: We can – and we must – partner together to move our city forward in these challenging times.

- 4. In recent years, our community has experienced several public safety issues, including but not limited to an increase in property crime, the effects of drug use from the homeless population, RVs being parked in the neighborhood, etc. What do you see as the chief causes of the challenges? How do you propose to work with an array of organizations including entities like the Magnolia Chamber, Seattle Police Department, homeless advocates, etc. to address the issues?**

In our city and across the country, the driving force behind crime, homelessness, and many other related issues is years of compounding income inequality and a severe dearth of affordable housing. While we can't solve all the root causes of income inequality on our own, where Seattle has failed is in taking adequate steps to mediate and improve the challenges we can address.

Seattle has the resources to better address homelessness; to provide those in need with drug and alcohol services, or job training and resume building, to help them get back on their feet; to drive the building of affordable housing; to support an equitable economy where small businesses and workers can thrive; and to create a better public safety system where all feel safe and welcome. Once again, we need leaders who listen, who acknowledge the problems we have, and then who work with others to determine and implement solutions.

Recent discussions on public safety have focused on arbitrary defunding levels of our police force. I'm the only major candidate who has been unequivocal from the beginning of the campaign: I do not support defunding the police. With every organization I've worked, performance doesn't improve by reducing resources needed to meet goals. I'm wholly committed to police reform and creating a public safety system where all are safe – it's been a focus of my entire career in public service. I believe we can ensure public safety, and an accountable and transparent police department, by changing tactics and changing police culture – I'm ready to do that in office.

Infrastructure

- 5. The Magnolia Bridge is reaching the end of its useful life. Do you support the replacement of the Magnolia Bridge at its current location? If so, describe the necessary steps to accomplish this goal and how are you going to leverage other elected officials and local state and federal government to find funding. If not, what alternative(s) do you recommend for replacing the access by Metro, school busses and truck traffic to Magnolia and the neighborhood provided by the current bridge?**

Absolutely. I am the only candidate for Mayor who presented a plan for infrastructure investment on day one of my campaign, because I believe we have a crucial opportunity as we exit the pandemic and expand investments in our city. My hope is to act on truly local priorities and work closely with the Biden administration to greatly invest in infrastructure and jobs.

Transportation is an obvious place to start, we need the kind of expansive and synergistic transit system that connects people to the places they want to go and lives up to this city's innovative spirit. Seattle's decaying infrastructure puts this potential at risk – ill-equipped to keep up with the city's growth, creating long commutes and transportation headaches. We must solve existing issues and proactively respond to future challenges.

The West Seattle Bridge shutdown is a cautionary tale, and cannot be repeated in other limited access neighborhoods like Magnolia. We must get ahead of the issue and focus on near term and long term solutions, including:

- Seeking Federal Funds through one-time appropriations (earmarks) or through a broader infrastructure plan (or both) to accelerate retrofit or replacement of the bridge—as well as other aging facilities in our city;
- Working with our State delegation to make sure local priorities are part of any new transportation package;

- Assuring that renewal of the “Move Seattle” levy includes increased major infrastructure maintenance funding.

During my Council tenure, I had a proven track record of supporting critical infrastructure projects. That will be the same approach I bring as Mayor.

Workforce and Post Covid Economy

6. How will you work with local chambers of commerce to ensure thriving business development in neighborhoods like Magnolia?

Last month, I officially kicked off my SOS: Support our Shops Tour from Pike Place Market, the heart of small business in our city. Through this tour I’m planning to visit over 20 neighborhoods before November across all seven council districts, to hear directly from small business owners and their employees about how the city can better support them. I’ve already met with over 120 local business leaders, many of whom have shared their excitement that someone was reaching out to hear about their concerns.

I have a long history of assisting small, local, and BIPOC-owned businesses get off the ground and turned into thriving job creators and community pillars. As mayor, I’ll be a trusted partner, delivering an equitable recovery with dedicated resources to help businesses get back on their feet and expand to take advantage of opportunities ahead. I’m also the only candidate with a plan to preserve and revitalize arts, culture, and nightlife – some of Seattle’s hardest hit businesses and creatives. I know by partnering together with local Chambers and their members, we can better promote this recovery and build a better economy for the future.

If the Magnolia Chamber and your members are open to a tour, or if you know of another business district or a specific small business we should visit (or are a small business owner or employee!), please do not hesitate to reach out to us at info@bruceforseattle.com.

7. What steps will you take to revitalize the Seattle economy and help rebuild downtown and key business districts throughout the city?

Ensuring Seattle’s economy continues to grow with new jobs, new opportunities and new innovations was a major motivator for me to enter this campaign. Some candidates seem to take this for granted, but I know this kind of prosperity is earned – through a strong workforce, through healthy communities, and through trusting relationships between local business leaders and city government.

I’m inspired by stories of creativity and perseverance during the pandemic, but the most important lesson has been that in order for a recovery to work, we must keep our smallest businesses from slipping through the cracks and protect workers. We need leadership and an open door in City Hall. I’ve called for use of federal recovery funds to go toward small business recovery efforts, increased access to capital and resources, and new “business to business” partnerships to ensure that smaller businesses and BIPOC entrepreneurs enjoy the ancillary revenues and success of many larger businesses.

Progress on homelessness, public safety, world-class parks and amenities will be visible under my leadership and will inspire renewed confidence in our city. And, as mentioned, I’ll be someone leaders can trust to be honest and upfront about my priorities, our city’s needs, and how we can work together.

8. What are your business and workforce priorities and specifically, how will you work with business and labor interests and the city council to seek consensus among the various stakeholders?

In this campaign, as in my past campaigns, I'm proud to have earned support from both business leaders and from labor. They recognize my commitment to a full and equitable recovery for all and they know that this is something I have a proven record of doing. Simply put, we will not make progress on homelessness or achieve an equitable economic recovery without buy-in from both business and labor. I'm going to present the coherent vision and commit to the needed outreach and partnership required to bring all parties to the table and then get the plan done.

Beyond this, one of my most important priorities is that I strongly believe Seattle must win the coming jobs war. That's why I'm proposing a Seattle Jobs Center that will connect job seekers with the opportunities they need: positions and careers, training and workforce education, and more.

Using all available commercialized online job boards, state sponsored employment ads, executive search materials and every means to help employ every possible employee, and making sure we provide resources to re-tool and retrain job applicants seeking work, we will explore making sure Seattle is the facilitator of employing every available job applicant. Some employers have phenomenal programs for supporting returning military veterans or previously incarcerated residents.

When I share this idea, it's something businesses and labor unions can't get enough of – it benefits our entire city, addresses concerns, and helps build stronger organizations and communities. Working with our businesses and with labor, we can create a platform that aligns our interests and provides a user-friendly infrastructure, making Seattle known as the city that values and promotes jobs, jobs and jobs.